

Family Miscellany.

For The Principia.

THIRSTING FOR GOD.

Psalm xcvi, 1-8.

O God, my living God, thou art;
Thou wilt I seek; to thee I cry,
With longing heart, with longing ear,
In thirsting land, and desert dry.

Thy power and glory to behold,
As in thy temples I have seen
In beauteous majesty unfold,
Without a cloud to intervene.

Thy loving kindness, rich and free,
Dearest to me, I prize;
And while thy smiling face I see,
To thee my joyful song shall rise.

Thou wilt I bless thee while I live,
With hands uplifted in thy name;
The breath thy power and goodness give
Thy power and goodness shall proclaim.

Thee I remember, on my bed,
Amid the watches of the night,
Thy shadowing wings around my head
Shall shelter me till morning light.

For The Principia.

MY BABY QUEEN.

BY KEYS SIBIRLEY.

A dashing queen
That glimmers through
Thy sunny days between—
A sun, let down
From skies of blue—
Such doth my baby seem.

Not the pink-lipped shell,
That floats low
'Neath the depths of the sounding sea.
Is clothed with a beauty
Half as rare
As my baby's cheek, to me!

Oh! never was seen,
In the wide, wide world,
A light so clear, I ween;
As gleams from
O'er the pure white brow
Of my darling Baby Queen.

Oh, lowly bends proud head of mine,
To gracious nod, or beck of thine;
Thankfully, tearfully,
Joyful to be
Thy willing votary!
Long be thy reign,
Most precious Baby Queen!

The rosy moon,
With lips apart,
Wreathed with an angel's smile,
Maketh the trembling
Drops to start,
As I listen entranced to the while.

To the wooing tones
Of the sweetest voice
Gods own dear love hath given,
To charm the heart,
Or lure the ear,
In its pathway on to Heaven.

Not the wild-dove's note
In the morn's first glow,
Which swells with his wondrous throat,
Such a song of love,
As mine, from lips of my Baby Queen!

Oh, lowly bends proud head of mine,
To gracious nod, or beck of thine;
Thankfully, tearfully,
Joyful to be
Thy willing votary!
Long be thy reign,
Most precious Baby Queen!

This cherished Queen
Whom Love doth crown,
A partial, glowing, mother-love,
Is a wee white Lamb,
Strayed far adown
From pastures green, above.

Dear Shepherd of
Thy wandering sheep,
Guide Thou these tender
Trembling feet
Back to thy fold on high!
List to this tender
Voiceless prayer,
By white mute lips expressed,
For this precious
Lambkin, where
Thy "little ones" find rest!

REFINING FIRES.

BY REV. JOHN PERKINS.

"Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver."

—Isaiah xlii, 2.

Not with silver, not with gold,
Every grain of every ore,
Multiplied a thousandfold,
Doth our God the soul refine.

Not from broad and fertile fields,
Nor from any form of wealth,
That Earth's face or bosom yields,
Comes "the soul's eternal health."

But "true riches" come from toil
Of the muscles or the mind,
And, by culture of the soil,
Or the soul, is man refined.

With the chastening power of pain,
Tossing on a sleepless bed,
Ours that grow upon the brain,
Bleeding heart and throbbing head;

With our sorrows for the past,
With our fears of coming ill,
That their forward shadows cast
On our pathway, dark and chill;

With the discipline of tears,
O'er loved and lost ones shed,
Whom our loves of earth have freed,
Dying out, or wholly dead;

With the depths of voiceless woe
That have wrenched our hearts so much,
Hopes that withered long ago
Under disappointment's touch;

With the agonizing pang,
Felt from Folly's Partisan dart,
With remorse's vigorous fang,
Struck into the guilty heart;

With our fruitless efforts, made
To attain some shining goal,
Labors lost, and trust betrayed—
Doth our God refine the soul.

AT EVENING.

O Thou true life of all that live,

Who dost, unmoved, all motion sway;

Who dost the morn and evening give,
And through its changes guide the day—

Thy light upon our evening part!

So may our souls no sunset see,
But death to us an open door

To an eternal morning be!

AN OLD MAID.

For The Principia.

The wind whistles are abroad to night, fierce

and unrelenting. How they shriek as they

rush past the old barn, with its broad

alloys, dizzy scaffolds, and mammoth hay-

mows, where we used to have such merry

games of hide and seek, in the days of the

long ago! And anon it rushes down into

low wistful sobbing, as if in sudden sorrow

for the little feet that used to patter over

the great floor, but which, long since wearied

with life's toilsome march, have passed over

the river, into the better country. Again it

busts into wallings, as if in agony that can

not be controlled, and again dies away in

faint sighings, only to repeat over and over

the same mournful programme, accompanied,
sometimes, by shrill whistlings and puffings,
like "Old Hundred" with variations.

I believe I am a little too-night. Even
my bright wood fire, now casting a gleam of
golden light over the crimson arm chair in the
corner, now flashing merrily on my knitting
needles, making them shine like burnished
gold, now throwing a flood of light full upon
me, as I sit quietly swaying to and fro in the
little rocking chair, revealing spectacles,
wrinkles, and silver hair, fails to impart its
usual evening cheerfulness. Nor does the
contented purring of Betsy Trotwood, the old
tabby cat, produce its wonted soothing effect.

I think the dreary wind makes me melancholy;
and then several little vexatious things have
occurred to-day, which have somewhat disturbed
my equanimity. In the first place, I awoke
this morning with the realization that it was
my—th birthday. Dear reader, what would
you give to know how many times I have cele-

brated the anniversary? Alas! old father
Time takes no backward steps, and we poor
mortals are dragged hurriedly on, over the
months and years; no matter how obstinately
we hold back, or how unwilling we are to
proceed. But I was saying that it was my
birthday. If you are very curious to know
my age, you have only to open that old Bible,
lying on my little stand, and you will find the
record—the day, month, and year, written in
my father's own hand. What a little time
it seems since I was longing for my seven-

teenth birthday! Well, secondly, as I was
coming up stairs this morning, with an arm
full of wood for my stove, I heard Ann Am-
elia saying to her intimate friend, Georgiana
Tomkins, "What plagues old maids are!"
Now there is Aunt Tab, as pokey as she can
be! If I thought I should ever be an old
maid, I should be tempted to commit suicide
at once! There, now a narrow ribbon of
light has fallen just across the lower half of
my old sampler, hanging yonder; bringing
out clear and strong those lines I cried over
so when I was embroidering them.

"Here on this canvas, I will throw
A little wreath of rhyme;
In future years I'll serve to show
The rapid flight of time."

"Wrought by the hand of Tabitha Maria
Stebbins, aged eleven years."—The year is
in the shadow.

Now that simple little speech of Ann
Amelia's, this morning, somehow grated harshly
on my feelings, notwithstanding that I am
used to being snubbed and called harsh names
—as what old maid is not? It has come into
my mind, as I sit here alone, this evening,
to just jot down my ideas on old maidhood.

There has very much been written, and much
more said in regard to this class of single-
blessed maidens, and it is no more than fair
to say on the subject. Some writers are wont
to describe us as females of such vinegar
sourness and razor sharpness as to effectually
prevent the approach of any of the sterner
sex, should such an approach be meditated.

Others represent us as persons of remarkable
sweetness and amiability of disposition, but
of such ugliness of form and feature that our sweet-
ness is, as it were, wasted on the desert air,
and we are obliged to smother our wealth of feel-

ing, ice over our hearts, and let "concealment
like the worm in the bud" prey on our only
visage. Of such are the Dorotheas of our De-
mocratical Societies. Still others imagine us to
be an unfortunate class of individuals who
have, in some early period of our existence, been
"disappointed," and in consequence have, like
the morning glory which the sun shines
hotly upon, folded the leaves of our affec-

tions closely together, and are as though we
were not; persons who are supposed to have,
somewhere on our premises, a package of old
yellow letters, tied with a faded blue ribbon,
and the profile of a specimen of masculinity
cut out of white paper and ingeniously fastened
over black. These notions of by-gone days
are wrong, it is said, to look at only on
extraordinary occasions; as when we hear
that the gentleman in question has buried his
third wife, and cherish the fond hope that we
may be his fourth—a hope which, like all our
other hopes, is doomed to an everlasting dis-

appointment in shortly after hearing that he
has taken to himself a fourth help-mate, where-
upon they conclude that the unfortunate maiden
will continue, to the end of her existence, a
"lone, lone creature," chewing fennel seed and
taking snuff in a mild way, and that her favor-
ite reading will be small scraps of poetry
found in some out-of-the-way magazine or
country newspaper, and Solomon's Songs.

And all writers finally draw to the same con-
clusion; namely, that should a favorable
opportunity for a change of situation occur
there would be no old maids.

Now I give it as my solemn and undivided
opinion, that old maids are, in all respects,
morally, mentally, and physically, perfect fac-
similes of their married sisters; that you will
find just as many terrors, just as many good
points, lonely women, and just as many sickly,
sentimental ones, among married women as
among old maids; that a great majority of
old maids have had exceedingly favorable op-
portunities of changing their condition, which
they have not accepted; and also that a very
respectable minority have had no such oppor-

tunities at all.

"Whatever is to be, will be."

Now I myself belong to the minority, and
I here take it upon myself to say that, having
long ago passed through the various stages of
the hoyden, the sentimental maiden, and the
coquette, and having in later years observed
and reflected much upon the vicissitudes of life,
I have finally arrived at the desired haven of
sensible, contented cheerfulness. Yes! I am
happy—that is, as happy as any humble in-

habitant of this mundane sphere can expect
to be, while still in the flesh. I have no de-
sire to change my condition. I should indeed
be a most foolish woman to wish to give up
my freedom to say, and do, and go, as I fancy,
or to change my cozy little room, where I can
always retire when I am sore vexed in spirit,
for anything short of a room in the Heavenly
Mansion.

A note for me, Ann Amelia! Who
brought it here, this dreadfully windy night?
The Squire's boy, did you say? Well, some of
his children are sick, I have no doubt. Poor
man! his wife has been dead six months come
the 14th of this month. Well, go down, my
dear, and I will read it. A recipe for some
medicine he sends, I dare say.

Well, now I am late! To think Squire
Allen should ask me to be his wife! Well, I

thought he looked unusually pleasant at me
last Sunday, at meeting. "Five motherless
boys, just at that age when they must need a
mother's care; and I can think of no one who
could so well fill their mother's place as you,
Miss Tabitha!" It is a subject, which requires
profound consideration. I must do my duty,
wherever the path lies. I don't know what
to do!

To marry or not to marry, that is the ques-
tion;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The stings and arrows of an old maid's fortune;
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by marrying end them. To be an old
maid,

To marry; and by marriage to say we end
The heart-aches, and the thousand natural
shocks
Old maids are heir to—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished.

But I must be considerate. I must not give
a hasty answer;
For in that married state what things may
happen.

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause—
It puzzles us, and makes us rather bear
The ills we have, than fly to others that we
know not of.

ONE WEEK LATER:
The path of duty has been made plain be-
fore me. I have had a talk with Squire
Allen. The three youngest boys are just
coming down with the measles, and Johnny
has got the whooping cough. Poor man! I
feel for him. I go there next week as the
Squire's wife.

"Whatever is to be, will be." S. T.

LITERARY TASTE, IN THE MASSES.

We lately copied into the Principia an ar-
ticle on The Literary History of the Pilgrim's
Progress, in which the fact was apparent that
the masses of the common people appreciated
the literary merits of the work, long before it
obtained recognition by the literati. That
instance was not a solitary one. Many other
cases might be mentioned. The critics, not
unfrequently, are compelled to reverse their
decisions, in deference to the popular vote.

Byron's satire of "English bards and Scotch
Reviewers" was leveled, mainly, at the critics
by whom Byron, himself, had been disparaged.
Later still, Pollock's "Course of Time" found
only one among the many Reviews, to greet
it with favor. Leading religious editors, in
this country, even then, gave it the cold
shoulder. But plain people were de-
lighted with it. Well do we remember when
Whittier's poetry found circulation only in
abolition papers, at which the recognized liter-
ati of the country turned up their delicate
noses. After it appeared in a volume, they
noticed it only to deride it. "Uncle Tom's
Cabin" was a work with the readers of a
weekly journal, chiefly "fanciers" as they were
considered, before it found a book-publisher.
Longfellow, and Tennyson, are now added
to the catalogue, by a writer in the Atlantic
Monthly, who, in speaking of Longfellow
says—

"If now we care to explain the eager and
affectionate welcome which always has been
his writings, it is easy to see to what general
quality that greeting must be ascribed. As
with Walter Scott, or Victor Hugo, or Ber-
anger, or Dickens, or Addison in the "Spec-
tator," or Washington Irving, it is a genial
humor. It is a quality, in all these instances,
independent of literary art and of genius,
but which is made known to others, and there-
fore becomes possible to be recognized, only
through literary art. The creative imagina-
tion, the airy fancy, the exquisite grace,
harmony, and simplicity, the rhetorical bril-
liancy, the incisive force, all the intellectual
powers and charms of style with which that
feeling may be expressed, are informed and
vitalized by the sympathy itself. But whether
a man who writes verses has genius—whether
he be a poet according to literary canons,
or whether some of his lines resemble the lines
of other writers—and whether he be original,
are questions which may be answered in every
way, of every poet in history. Who is a poet
but he whom the heart of man permanently
accepts as a singer of its own hopes, emotions,
and thoughts? And what is poetry but that
song? If words have a uniform meaning, it
is useless to declare that Pope cannot be a
poet, if Lord Byron is, or that Moore is con-
fident, if Wordsworth be genuine. For the art
of poetry is like all other arts. The easel
that Colini worked is not less genuine
and excellent than the dome of Michael Angelo.
Is nobody but Shakespeare a poet? Is there
no music but Berlioz's? Is there no
mountain-peak but Diavolagh? No extract
but Niagara?"

Thirty years ago, almost every critic in
England exploded with laughter over the
poetry of Tennyson. Yet his poetry has ex-
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powers and charms of style with which that
feeling may be expressed, are informed and
vitalized by the sympathy itself. But whether
a man who writes verses has genius—whether
he be a poet according to literary canons,
or whether some of his lines resemble the lines
of other writers—and whether he be original,
are questions which may be answered in every
way, of every poet in history. Who is a poet
but he whom the heart of man permanently
accepts as a singer of its own hopes, emotions,
and thoughts? And what is poetry but that
song? If words have a uniform meaning, it
is useless to declare that Pope cannot be a
poet, if Lord Byron is, or that Moore is con-
fident, if Wordsworth be genuine. For the art
of poetry is like all other arts. The easel
that Colini worked is not less genuine
and excellent than the dome of Michael Angelo.
Is nobody but Shakespeare a poet? Is there
no music but Berlioz's? Is there no
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but Niagara?"

Thirty years ago, almost every critic in
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